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AUTHOR Lucas, John A.
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ABSTRACT

A longitudinal study of full- and part-time students was undertaken at William Rainey Harper College (WRHC) to provide institutional data about student performance over time. Each fall from 1967 to 1980, transcripts of a random sample of 200 full-time and 200 part-time beginning credit students were analyzed to obtain data about students' attendance and graduation patterns, grades, age, prior college experience, and high school standing. The study revealed that: (1) student grade point averages increased following two changes in WRHC grading policy; (2) the average full-time student starting between 1972 and 1978 attempted an average of 44 hours, passed an average of 42 hours, and attended for an average of 4.4 semesters; (3) 10% of the full-time students stayed for seven or more semesters; (4) 73% of the entering full-time students returned the following year or later; (5) 35.5% of the full-time students attending between 1972 and 1977 earned an associate degree or certificate; (6) the average part-time student beginning between 1971 and 1977 attempted an average of 18 hours, passed an average of 16.5 hours, and attended for an average of 3.3 semesters; (7) 15% of the part-time students attended seven or more semesters, and 10.5% received an associate degree or certificate; (8) continuing education enrollments increased rapidly from 1970; and (9) between 1967 and 1980, 5% to 15% of the students transferred credits from another college, and 35% to 45% had some previous post-secondary experience. (Author/HB)

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WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE

LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS ENTERING
HARPER COLLEGE 1967-1980

John A. Lucas
Director
OFFICE OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH

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William Rainey Harper College
Algonquin and Roselle Roads
Palatine, IL 60067

Operational Research Staff

Sherry Langford, Secretarial
Linda Pones, Mailing, Tallying and Telephone Surveying
Alice Keenan, Mailing and Tallying

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ABSTRACT

THIS STUDY FOLLOWED SAMPLES OF SUCCESSIVE CLASSES (1967-1980) OF 200 FULL-TIME AND 200 PART-TIME STUDENTS EACH YEAR IN A LONGITUDINAL MANNER. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY WAS TO PROVIDE SOME BASIC INSTITUTIONAL DATA ABOUT STUDENT PERFORMANCE OVER TIME. DATA WAS OBTAINED ON THEIR PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT AT HARPER THROUGH ANALYSIS OF THE REGULAR AND CONTINUING EDUCATION TRANSCRIPTS OF EACH OF THE STUDENTS SAMPLED.

RESULTS OF THIS STUDY SHOWED OVER THE YEARS THE AVERAGE GRADE POINT OF A STUDENT HAS RISEN IN DIRECT RELATIONSHIP TO CHANGES IN THE GRADING POLICY.

THE AVERAGE FULL-TIME STUDENT STARTING BETWEEN 1972 AND 1978 ACCUMULATED 42 CREDIT HOURS AND ATTENDED 4.4 SEMESTERS WHILE 35.5 PERCENT RECEIVED A DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE. MEANWHILE, THE AVERAGE PART-TIME STUDENT STARTING BETWEEN 1971 AND 1977 HAS ACCUMULATED 16.5 CREDIT HOURS AND ATTENDED MORE THAN THREE SEMESTERS WHILE 10.5 PERCENT OF THIS CLASS HAS RECEIVED A DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE. IT IS PROJECTED IN SIX OR SEVEN YEARS THAT MORE RECENT PART-TIME CLASSES WILL PERSIST EVEN LONGER.

THE RAPIDLY GROWING CONTINUING EDUCATION ENROLLMENT IN THE 1970s BEGAN TO IMPACT THE TRADITIONAL CREDIT ENROLLMENT BY 1974 AS SHOWN BY THIS LONGITUDINAL STUDY. SOME 8.25 PERCENT OF THE PART-TIME STUDENTS SINCE 1974 HAD TAKEN CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES PREVIOUS TO OR SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THEIR TRADITIONAL CREDIT ENROLLMENT. MOREOVER, IT IS PROJECTED THAT CLOSE TO 23 PERCENT OF THESE PART-TIME STUDENTS WILL EVENTUALLY PARTICIPATE IN THE CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM. THE IMPACT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION ON FULL-TIME DEGREE CREDIT STUDENTS IS LESS DRAMATIC.

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Purpose

The purpose of this study is to follow samples of beginning full-time and part-time traditional credit students over a long period of time observing their performance and achievements at Harper College. This type of longitudinal study provides the answers to such questions as: What percentage of all full-time students starting at Harper will ever graduate or accumulate 36 hours of credit or attend four semesters or will take Continuing Education courses? The same questions can be answered about beginning part-time students. Other questions can also be answered such as their GPA, whether they have transferred into Harper, their age and their standing in their high school graduating class.

Population Surveyed

A random sample of 200 full-time and 200 part-time beginning traditional credit students has been gathered from the population of students entering each fall from 1967 to 1980.

Method Used

Transcripts have been gathered on all students in the target samples and the data analyzed. In addition, a search has been made for transcripts in the Continuing Education file on all these targeted students.

Discussion of Results

There have been two policy decisions which have affected the grade point average of students over the years. The first occurred in 1972 when students were able to repeat failed courses and replace the old D or F with the new grade rather than just averaging it in. The second policy change came in 1974 and allowed faculty to give N grades rather than Fs to students who simply didn't attend. The following table shows the average grade point of students in these three periods of time.

<u>Student Started as a</u>	<u>1967-1971</u>	<u>Repeat and</u> <u>Replacement of</u> <u>Grade Policy</u> <u>Instituted</u> <u>1972-1973</u>	<u>N Grade</u> <u>Instituted</u> <u>1974-1980</u>
Full-time student	1.94	2.30	2.61
Part-time student	2.25	2.30	2.70

7 This table shows that the grade point average jumped in 1972 at the start of the repeat and grade replacement policy and again in 1974 when the N grade policy started. Also note part-time students generally have a higher GPA than full-time students. Other studies have shown that this phenomenon is caused by older and generally part-time students having a higher GPA.

In terms of length of time students persisted at Harper and credit hours accumulated, this trend started off at a high persistence level for the first 1967 class, but then the persistence level dropped dramatically reaching a low in 1968-1969. The level rose again until it peaked with the 1976 part-time class and the 1974 full-time class. Projections based on current enrollment data indicate as further data accumulates, the persistence level of more recent classes will continue to increase.

The average full-time student starting between 1972 and 1978 has averaged 44 hours attempted, 42 hours passed, and has attended 4.4 semesters. In fact, over ten percent of these full-time students stayed for seven or more semesters, which means into at least their fourth year at Harper. This data seems to render the description "a two-year college" meaningless. Other data shows that 73 percent of these classes have returned the following year or later. Some 35.5 percent of the full-time students starting between 1972 and 1977 have earned either an associate degree or a certificate at Harper. It appears from projection that after five to seven years, the recent entering classes will also approach this figure.

The average part-time student beginning between 1971 and 1977 has averaged 18 hours attempted and 16.5 hours passed and has attended 3.3 semesters. Some 15 percent have attended seven or more semesters. Moreover, 47 percent of this group has returned to Harper a year or more later. **About** 10.5 percent of these part-time samples have received an associate degree or a certificate. Projections indicate that after seven years, more recent classes will match these figures.

Over the years five to 15 percent of the students have officially transferred credits in from other colleges. It is interesting to note, however, that student characteristic studies have shown that 35-45 percent of Harper's students have had some postsecondary experience prior to coming to Harper. Thus most students who have attended another college don't attempt to transfer in credits.

The average age of the entering full-time student has varied between 18 and 20 while the average age of the entering part-time student averaged between 23½ and 28½. The age of these entering students has remained constant, but the mix of full-time and part-time students is changing and students are remaining longer. Therefore, the average age of the entire traditional credit student body is gradually increasing.

The high school graduating class rank of Harper's **entering students** jumped dramatically in 1973 and has remained fairly constant since then between the 60th and 65th **percentiles**. The ACT scores of our full-time students have been gradually declining since 1970 when the average composite was 20. The last four years it has averaged 18.2. Data is available on only a small portion of the part-time students, but over the years their composite scores have been averaging 1.5 points below the full-time students.

The dramatic growth in Continuing Education (C.E.) enrollment in the 70s and its relationship to traditional credit enrollment started to show up in the longitudinal study data with the 1974 entering class. Since there was no Continuing Education enrollment until the fall of 1970, it was impossible for the first four traditional credit classes to have enrolled after first being introduced to higher education by Continuing Education offerings. Enrollment in Continuing Education previous to or simultaneously with traditional credit was at first small, but has rapidly grown and its effect can now be seen in the traditional credit classes which began in 1974. Looking at the entering classes since 1974, 8.25 percent of the part-time students starting in those years had previously taken or were simultaneously taking Continuing

Education courses, a huge jump from previous classes. Over the years it appears about 15 percent of the part-time traditional credit students take Continuing Education courses later. This now means a total of 23 percent of these part-time traditional credit students will eventually also enroll in Continuing Education. Moreover, among these part-time students there is now about the same number of students motivated to enroll in traditional credit courses as a result of Continuing Education involvement as there are students motivated to participate in Continuing Education offerings as a result of their traditional credit enrollment.

As would be expected, the impact of Continuing Education on full-time traditional credit enrollment is less dramatic, but nevertheless, two percent of these full-time students starting since 1974 had previously enrolled in Continuing Education offerings or were simultaneously taking these offerings. Over the years 11 percent of the full-time traditional credit students participated in Continuing Education courses later. In total it appears now that about 13 percent of the full-time traditional credit students will eventually also enroll in Continuing Education offerings.

Major Conclusions

Over the years the average grade point of a student has risen in direct relationship to changes in the grading policy.

The average full-time student starting between 1972 and 1978 accumulated 42 credit hours and attended 4.4 semesters while 35.5 percent received a degree or a certificate. Meanwhile, the average part-time student starting between 1971 and 1977 has accumulated 16.5 credit hours and attended more than three semesters while 10.5 percent of this class has received a degree or a certificate. It is projected in six or seven years that more recent part-time classes will persist even longer.

The rapidly growing Continuing Education enrollment in the 1970s began to impact the traditional credit enrollment by 1974 as shown by this longitudinal study. Some 8.25 percent of the part-time students since 1974 had taken Continuing Education courses previous to or simultaneously with their traditional credit enrollment. Moreover, it is projected that close to 23 percent of these part-time students will eventually participate in the Continuing Education program. **The impact of Continuing Education on full-time degree credit students is less dramatic.**

LONGITUDINAL DATA OF FULL-TIME TRADITIONAL CREDIT STUDENTS AT HARPER

	Students Beginning in the Fall of													
	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Sample size	200	200	187	218	199	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Withdrew before establishing a GPA	3	1	5	6	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean GPA	1.92	1.82	1.78	2.05	2.12	2.32	2.28	2.59	2.61	2.64	2.63	2.65	2.61	2.52
Mean cumulative hours attempted	45.50	40.86	33.13	37.20	40.39	49.03	42.27	45.55	42.54	42.41	44.81	43.91	39.57	25.91
Mean cumulative hours passed	40.35	34.85	28.90	33.31	36.89	41.92	39.56	44.62	41.55	41.56	43.83	43.32	38.64	24.89
Percent registered one year later	57.50	53.00	42.25	45.41	58.30	58.00	56.00	68.50	60.50	59.50	60.00	65.50	64.50	67.50
Percent not registered one year later, but who returned another time	17.00	13.00	14.44	12.84	7.50	10.50	14.00	11.00	11.00	15.50	12.00	8.00	8.00	0
Percent who never returned after first year	25.50	34.00	43.32	41.74	34.20	31.50	30.00	20.50	28.50	25.00	28.00	26.50	27.50	32.50
Average number of semesters registered	4.33	3.55	3.21	3.61	3.94	4.43	4.25	4.83	4.32	4.35	4.33	4.20	3.65	2.88
Percent Registering for:														
One semester	14.50	11.50	24.60	18.30	16.60	8.00	8.50	6.50	7.50	4.50	4.50	6.50	6.50	6.00
Two semesters	13.00	23.00	19.79	22.00	19.10	23.00	21.50	15.00	20.00	17.00	22.00	19.50	19.50	20.50
Three semesters	9.00	12.50	15.51	12.80	10.10	10.50	12.00	8.50	15.00	18.50	11.50	8.50	13.50	53.50
Four semesters	21.00	18.50	19.25	19.30	18.60	17.00	13.50	21.00	15.50	15.50	16.00	20.00	30.50	20.00
Five semesters	16.00	16.50	6.95	10.10	12.10	14.00	16.00	18.00	15.00	18.50	17.00	22.00	23.00	0
Six semesters	12.00	7.50	6.95	7.80	9.00	12.00	13.00	13.50	13.50	11.50	14.00	13.50	7.00	0
Seven or more semesters	14.50	10.50	6.95	9.60	14.60	15.50	15.50	17.50	13.50	14.50	15.00	10.00	0	0

LONGITUDINAL DATA OF FULL-TIME TRADITIONAL CREDIT STUDENTS AT HARPER (continued)

	Students Beginning in the Fall of													
Percent Passing:	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Under 24 hours no degree	31.50	37.00	52.94	42.20	39.20	22.00	29.00	19.50	21.50	21.00	21.50	14.00	27.50	35.50
24-35 hours no degree	10.50	20.50	15.51	15.60	14.10	23.50	17.00	18.50	23.50	25.50	20.50	22.50	19.50	60.00
36-47 hours no degree	12.50	10.50	7.49	9.20	7.00	4.00	10.50	8.50	9.00	11.00	6.50	12.50	16.00	2.00
48 or more hours no degree	22.00	16.00	11.23	13.80	13.60	1.00	9.00	15.00	11.50	15.00	14.50	16.50	10.50	0
48 or more hours with degree	21.00	16.00	11.76	16.50	23.10	34.50	30.00	36.50	31.00	24.50	35.50	27.50	24.00	0
Less than 48 hours with degree	1.50	0	1.07	1.40	1.50	4.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	.50	.50	1.50	1.00	2.00
Certificate only	1.00	0	0	1.40	1.50	2.00	1.50	1.00	1.50	2.50	1.00	.50	1.50	.50
Percent transferring in officially	15.50	13.00	4.28	5.04	10.10	12.50	10.50	8.50	13.50	6.00	8.50	5.50	4.50	7.50
Percent Taking Continuing Education courses	7.50	9.50	7.49	10.50	13.57	18.50	17.50	17.50	14.00	13.50	7.50	5.50	1.50	1.00
PCT taking traditional credit courses first	7.50	9.50	7.49	10.50	13.07	18.00	17.00	16.00	12.00	10.50	5.00	1.50	.50	.50
PCT taking Continuing Education courses first	0	0	0	0	.50	.50	.50	.50	2.00	1.50	1.50	0	.50	.50
PCT taking them simultaneously	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.00	0	1.50	1.00	4.00	.50	0
Mean age	18.50	18.70	18.90	19.10	18.50	20.30	18.40	18.74	19.30	18.75	18.76	18.13	18.55	18.73
Sample size of age	200	99	181	210	193	162	165	194	179	194	192	190	194	196
Mean rank in high school	38.10	39.31	43.50	40.60	44.00	47.60	58.48	61.80	59.30	63.10	63.82	63.33	61.79	64.88
Sample size of class rank	147	116	154	192	135	116	137	161	164	167	189	166	159	168
Mean ACT composite	19.20	19.70	20.00	20.60	19.50	19.50	18.99	19.13	18.86	18.98	18.26	18.24	17.42	18.78
Sample size of ACT	152	173	162	172	50	61	113	45	109	53	110	45	43	88

LONGITUDINAL DATA OF PART-TIME TRADITIONAL CREDIT STUDENTS AT HARPER

	<u>Students Beginning the Fall of</u>													
	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>
Sample size	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Withdrew before establishing a GPA	21	16	19	9	13	0	7	0	4	0	1	0	0	0
Mean GPA	2.30	2.09	2.22	2.28	2.34	2.24	2.35	2.86	2.67	2.63	2.77	2.70	2.70	2.57
Mean cumulative hours attempted	17.63	14.80	15.60	15.24	18.25	18.14	17.61	14.89	16.13	20.04	18.63	16.98	13.36	8.72
Mean cumulative hours passed	15.94	12.91	13.82	13.66	16.59	16.01	16.01	14.44	15.47	19.15	18.13	16.18	12.60	8.06
Percent registered one year later	29.50	21.50	25.50	25.00	24.00	29.00	31.50	32.00	32.00	39.00	36.50	43.50	41.00	37.00
Percent not registered one year later, but who returned another time	16.00	21.00	13.50	12.00	15.00	15.00	13.50	12.00	11.50	12.00	12.50	7.50	9.00	0
Percent who never returned after first year	54.50	57.50	61.00	63.00	61.00	56.00	55.00	56.00	56.50	49.00	51.00	49.00	50.00	63.00
Average number of semesters registered	3.37	2.35	2.83	2.78	3.21	3.24	3.09	3.16	3.29	3.62	3.26	2.98	2.66	2.15
<u>Percent Registering for:</u>														
One semester	37.50	42.00	46.50	42.50	36.50	39.00	40.00	36.50	32.00	23.50	34.00	26.00	26.50	31.50
Two semesters	22.50	24.50	16.50	25.00	27.00	20.50	21.00	24.50	25.50	28.50	19.00	23.50	26.50	31.00
Three semesters	8.00	8.50	7.50	10.00	8.00	7.00	9.50	10.00	11.50	12.00	11.50	17.50	17.50	29.00
Four semesters	7.50	6.50	7.50	6.50	6.50	5.50	6.50	6.00	8.00	12.00	11.00	12.00	18.50	8.50
Five semesters	5.50	6.00	3.50	2.00	4.00	6.50	5.00	3.00	3.50	3.50	3.50	7.00	6.00	0
Six semesters	4.50	2.50	6.00	3.50	4.50	6.00	5.50	6.00	5.00	6.50	3.50	10.50	5.00	0
Seven or more semesters	14.50	10.00	12.50	10.50	13.50	15.50	12.50	14.00	14.50	14.50	17.50	3.50	0	0

LONGITUDINAL DATA OF PART-TIME TRADITIONAL CREDIT STUDENTS AT HARPER (continued)

	Students Beginning in the Fall of													
Percent Passing:	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Under 12 hours no degree	67.00	70.00	69.00	72.00	63.50	59.50	63.00	63.00	58.50	51.50	56.00	55.50	59.50	75.50
12-23 hours no degree	13.00	14.50	10.50	10.50	16.00	14.50	15.00	14.00	20.50	19.50	18.50	21.00	22.00	21.50
24-35 hours no degree	5.50	5.00	4.00	2.50	5.50	8.00	4.50	8.00	6.00	9.50	6.50	8.00	11.50	2.00
36-47 hours no degree	2.50	2.50	5.00	3.00	.50	3.00	3.00	1.50	4.00	5.50	3.00	5.50	3.00	0
48 or more hours no degree	2.50	.50	3.00	1.00	1.50	3.00	5.00	1.00	3.50	6.00	4.50	3.00	.50	0
48 or more hours with degree	7.50	5.50	5.00	6.50	8.50	6.50	7.50	6.50	4.50	6.00	8.00	3.00	.50	0
Less than 48 hours with degree	1.50	1.00	2.50	3.00	2.00	1.50	1.50	4.00	.50	.50	1.50	1.50	.50	0
Certificate only	.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.50	4.00	.50	2.00	2.50	1.50	2.00	2.50	2.50	1.00
Percent transferring in officially	5.50	4.00	5.00	7.50	8.00	9.00	11.00	14.50	8.50	7.00	10.00	5.00	9.00	5.50
Percent Taking Continuing Education Courses	15.50	11.50	14.00	17.00	19.00	19.00	20.00	24.00	29.50	17.50	24.00	14.50	9.50	5.00
PCT taking traditional credit courses first	15.50	11.50	14.00	17.00	14.50	17.00	17.00	11.50	19.50	14.00	7.00	10.50	1.50	2.00
PCT taking Continuing Education courses first	0	0	0	0	3.50	2.00	2.00	10.50	8.00	1.50	4.50	1.00	4.00	3.00
PCT taking them simultaneously	0	0	0	0	1.50	0	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	12.50	3.00	4.00	0
Mean age	27.20	26.40	26.90	26.50	25.80	25.30	23.60	28.24	26.62	25.61	27.05	25.59	25.67	25.92
Sample size of age	199	198	196	181	191	173	133	198	168	183	188	182	192	193
Mean rank in high school	33.00	49.30	47.60	25.50	31.60	33.30	60.60	64.53	60.74	62.50	66.33	65.03	62.76	60.64
Sample size of class rank	15	96	175	166	27	33	120	154	156	171	183	155	144	148
Mean ACT composite	18.10	17.90	17.10	21.30	19.20	19.30	19.00	20.30	17.45	15.42	17.46	16.31	16.22	14.43
Sample size of ACT	17	16	11	26	18	10	26	3	22	12	28	13	9	21